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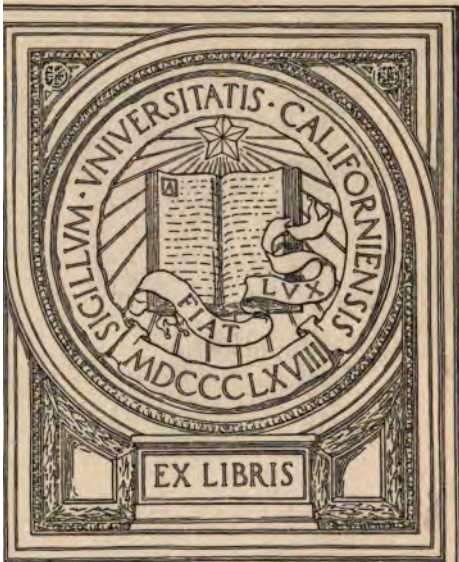
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Harriet Porter

ARMAND;

OR,

THE PEER AND THE PEASANT.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

Richard
ANNA CORA MOWATT,

AUTHOR OF "FASHION," A COMEDY, "EVELYN," ETC.

"Ancient Heaven

Extends its arch o'er all, and mocks the span
Of palaces and dungeons; where the hear,
In its free beatings 'neath the coarsest vest,
Claims kindred with diviner things than power
Of kings can raise or stifle."

TALFOURD.

NEW-YORK:

STRINGER & TOWNSEND, 222 BROADWAY
1851.

PRICE 12 1-2 CENTS.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE
YEAR 1849, BY JAMES MOWATT,

*In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District
of New York.*

Notice.

Managers in the United States are informed that the right to *perform* this Play is private property, and the Play cannot be performed without the express written consent of J. MOWATT.

TO
MRS. JOHN H. WILKINS,
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

MY DEAR MRS. WILKINS,

Allow me to dedicate "*Armand*" to you—one of the first and dearest amongst those absent friends, of whose love I have had such abundant proofs. I would say to you, as to them, that, highly as I prize the success with which "*Armand*" has been favored before a British public—that success can never diminish the value of the enthusiastic greeting the Play received in my own beloved land. And I beg my countrymen to believe that the ample record of home-kindnesses dwells ever freshly in my memory.

I am,
My dear Madam,
Respectfully and most affectionately
Yours,
ANNA CORA MOWATT.

London, Feb. 22nd, 1849.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE play of *Armand; or, the Peer and the Peasant*, was produced at the Park Theatre, New York, September 27th, 1847, and subsequently in Boston, Massachusetts. It was represented before a London audience, at the Theatre Royal, Marylebone, January 18th, 1849, and was acted twenty-one successive nights.

In England, as in America, the indulgence of the audience towards the production of a woman, and the exertions of the actors, rendered its success unequivocal and even brilliant.

Some slight liberty has been taken in portraying the character of Louis XV., who is not rendered so totally and revoltingly destitute of virtues as he is described by historians; but I trust the license is a pardonable one.

That Richelieu had a daughter, by a secret marriage, who was brought up in privacy, there is some little authority for believing, and the fact (if it be one) has already been made the subject of novels, &c.

The character of Armand has been objected to, as not

belonging to the reign of Louis XV., but I think historical records will bear me out in the conclusion, that it was during his reign that the seeds of the revolution were sown, and already began to shoot forth in the breasts of the lower orders. Armand's sentiments are but the foreshadowing of that revolution.

My acknowledgments are due and cheerfully paid to Mr. WATTS, the Manager of the Marylebone Theatre, for the liberality evinced in putting the play upon the stage, and in all his other arrangements—to Mr. DAVENPORT, for his impressive and spirited impersonation of the character of Armand—to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the company, for the heartiness with which they, one and all, contributed their exertions, and to the scenic Artist, for the admirable manner in which his labours were executed. I acknowledge with pleasure that to the united efforts of these parties the play was largely indebted for its success.

A. C. M.

London, February 22nd, 1849.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH, *King of France.*

DUKE DE RICHELIEU.

DUKE D'ANTIN, *an old Noble.*

ARMAND, *an Artizan.*

LE SAGE, *Attendant of the Duke D'Antin.*

VICTOR, *the King's favorite Page.*

JACOT, {
ETIENNE, } *Peasants.*

Male and Female Peasants.

BLANCHE.

DAME BABETTE.

JAQUELINE, *daughter of Dame Babette.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	NEW YORK.	LONDON.
	<i>Park, 1847.</i>	<i>Marylebone, 1849.</i>
LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH	Mr. Hield.	Mr. H. T. Craven.
DUKE DE RICHELIEU . . .	— Barry.	— James Johnstone.
DUKE D'ANTIN . . .	— Dougherty.	— J. W. Ray.
ARMAND	— Davenport.	— Davenport.
LE SAGE.	— McDougal.	— G. Cooke.
VICTOR	Miss Denin.	Miss S. Villars.
JACOT	Mr. Rae.	Mr. Green.
ETIENNE	— Gallot.	— Bowen.
BLANCHE	Mrs. Mowatt.	Mrs. Mowatt.
BABETTE	— Vernon.	— Johnstone.
JAQUELINE	Miss Kate Horn.	Miss M. Oliver.

NOTE.

Passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in representation.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L., *Left*; R. 1 E., *Right First Entrance*; 2 E., *Second Entrance*; D. F., *Door in the Flat.*

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L., *Left*; C., *Centre*; R. C., *Right of Centre*; L. C., *Left of Centre.*

. The reader is supposed to be on the Stage facing the Audience.

COSTUMES.

- KING LOUIS.**—First dress: Light blue velvet coat, and white satin long vest richly trimmed with silver, large cuffs, full shirt sleeves and frills, white satin breeches, long stockings, gartered below the knee, three-cornered hat, trimmed with lace and white feathers, white neckcloth and frills, crimson bow and diamond brooch, steel-hilted sword, broad white ribbon, with star over right shoulder, star on left breast, cane with rich tassels and cord, black shoes and buckles, on crimson ribbon, red heels, full powdered ringlet wig.—Second dress: Rich disguise, cloak and hat.—Third dress: Crimson velvet coat, trimmed with gold, blue ribbon over right shoulder, rest as before.
- RICHELIEU.**—First dress: Dark blue velvet coat and silver, white breeches and frills, sleeves, shoes, hat, sword, wig, &c., all of same style as King's; white broad ribbon over right shoulder, blue ribbon and diamond pin.—Second dress: Darker velvet, and gold, rest as before.
- D'ANTIN.**—First dress: Moroon velvet and silver, black satin breeches, white stockings, frills, sleeves, shoes, hat trimmed with black feather, mourning sword, &c., all same style as King's; purple ribbon over right shoulder, full powdered ringlet wig, bald front, black ribbon and pin.—Second dress: Black and gold, same style, rest as before.
- ARMAND.**—First dress: Salmon and blue short coat and full breeches, large cuffs, full shirt and sleeves, collar turned over, black ribbon, blue and white striped stockings, black shoes and buckles, white hat, trimmed with blue, and pink wreath, nosegay, in left button hole, ringlet wig.—Second dress: Blue military coat, trimmed with gold, high military boots and spurs, broad sword, shoulder belt, sword to break, white neckcloth and frills, red bow and brooch, powdered wig and ribbon.
- VICTOR.**—First dress: Salmon and silver, vest, breeches, stockings, garters, hat, shoes, sword, &c., &c., all same style as King's, powdered wig.—Second dress: Garnet velvet and gold, rest as before.
- LE SAGE.**—First dress: Brown coat, plain breeches, stockings over knee, shoes and buckles, long salmon vest, same style as the rest, hat without trimming, powdered wig and bag.—Second dress: Black velvet, trimmed with dark blue ribbon, rest as before.
- MALE PEASANTS.**—Various colors, same style as Armand.
- OFFICER AND GUARDS.**—White military coats, three-cornered hats, powder, white cravats, &c.
- PAGES.**—Court dresses, same style as King's, powder, &c.
- BLANCHE.**—First dress: White muslin cottage dress, with rows of white satin ribbon around the skirt, on the head a wreath of white may-flowers, shaped like coronet, a garland of white flowers, hung from the left shoulder.—Second dress: Plain white muslin slip, same wreath.—Third dress: A sober colored merino, made in the style of Louis XV., the boddice, trimmed with a ruche of pink silk and pompadour rosettes down the front, open skirt looped all around with same rosettes, under skirt of embroidered muslin, a band of pearls on the head.—Fourth dress: Silver brocade, embroidered in blue, closed in front, and looped all around with bunches of blue and silver leaves, the boddice, trimmed with ruches of white tulle and blue ribbon, under skirt of salmon colored satin, linings of brocade the same, powdered hair, with a small wreath of blue and silver leaves on one side, diamond ornaments.
- BABETTE.**—First dress: Orange colored skirt, blue merino boddice, black velvet jacket, white apron, high peasant cap, high-heeled shoes, colored stockings.—Second dress: Red petticoat, black jacket, cap, &c., as before.
- JAQUELINE.**—First dress: Striped under skirt, over dress of gay colored chintz, tucked up, laced boddice, cottage cap, small white apron, striped stockings. Second dress: Indian silk dress, made in same style as the first.
- Peasant dresses, in same style as Jaqueline, but none in white.

A R M A N D.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A beautiful part of the Garden of Versailles. Fountain of Neptune with statues. LE SAGE walking about as though musing.

Le Sage. Solve me this problem, *Le Sage*, if thou canst. Why should the Duke d'Antin occupy his thoughts with a young peasant? Why so earnestly desire that his majesty should behold her? *Unquestionably* there is a mystery; *indubitably* a mystery! But thou shalt solve it, *Le Sage*! Thou hast a head,—*incontestibly* a head,—*unqualifiedly* a wise head,—

[*Enter DUKE D'ANTIN, L. 1 E.*

Undoubtedly a head that sees—

D'Ant. Better than your eyes, I trust, *Le Sage*.

Le Sage. Pardon, your Grace. *Indisputably* I did not observe you.

D'Ant. I am all impatience to learn what took place last evening.

Le Sage. Your Grace shall hear. *Preparatively* I need not inform your Grace that, obeying your orders, I made myself acquainted with Dame Babette, down at the village, St. Denis, yonder. *Instantaneously* I discovered that your Grace had been rightly informed, and that the Duke de Richelieu frequently visits the dame's cottage in the garb of a citizen. *Unsuspectingly* the dame calls him Monsieur Antoine.

D'Ant. All this I know; proceed.

Le Sage. *Voluntarily!*

D'Ant. You talked to the dame and her young charge of these charming gardens, as I ordered?

Le Sage. I painted the beauties of Versailles with the hand of an artist and the tongue of a poet! Mam'selle Blanche was enchanted. *Courteously* I promised to obtain her and the dame an admission; *accordingly*, yesterday evening at dusk, when the garden was wholly deserted, I conducted them to this very spot. *Secretly* I then dispatched Victor to the King. *Insinuatingly* he suggested to his Majesty, that a *miraculously* lovely young peasant girl had, with a very talkative old woman, *inexplicably* obtained admission to his private gardens, and was wandering about in *ecstatically* rustic delight.

D'Ant. Go on; go on.

Le Sage. Immediately!

D'Ant. Did he come? Did he see her?

Le Sage. Certainly. His Majesty was *unsuspectingly* dying of ennui. *Involuntarily* he revived at the thought of an adventure, *prudentially* wrapped himself in a cloak, and *unreflectingly* hastened to the garden.

D'Ant. And then,—then he joined the peasants?

Le Sage. Indubitably.

D'Ant. They did not suspect that he was the king?

Le Sage. Incontestibly not.

D'Ant. He was fascinated with Blanche?

Le Sage. Indescribably!

D'Ant. He became joyous—elated—excited?

Le Sage. Extraordinarily!

D'Ant. Blanche was gay—artless—piquante?

Le Sage. Superlatively!

D'Ant. Hush! Victor comes this way. (*crossing R.*) Question him closely. This evening you shall have further directions. Be cautious. [*Exit R. 1 E.*]

Le Sage. Invariably!

Enter VICTOR, L. 1 E.

Victor. Ah! Monsieur Le Sage, we are charmed to encounter you.

Le Sage. *Delightedly* I salute his Majesty in miniature.

Victor. If you reflect on *our* size, Monsieur Le Sage, we would inform you—

Le Sage. That it is *immeasurably* beneath my notice.—A *particularly* correct and *pungently* philosophical conclusion. But, Monsieur Victor, a word concerning the young peasant, who yesterevening,—

Victor. Ah! you touch *us* nearly when you talk of her! Our love for the "illusive sex"—for such we deem them—is *our* Achilles' heel—*our* vulnerable point! His Majesty, like *ourselves*, has been cold for a season; but once more the intoxicating effect of the tender passion has overpowered *us*.

Enter KING and RICHELIEU, L. 3 E.

In a word, his Majesty is pleased with this young piece of incarnate loveliness,—we may say charmed.

King. Boy, thou art overbold to speak of this To other than ourselves. Away, and be The answer to our wish when next you seek Our presence. Go! You comprehend us, sir?

[*VICTOR and LE SAGE make a low obeisance.*

[*Exit VICTOR and LE SAGE, L. U. E.*

Here, Richelieu, is the consecrated spot
Where I beheld her first. Here would I raise
An altar, sacred,—not to love, (no rood
Within our kingdom but were meet for that.)
Be this to first impressions dedicated!

Rich. My liege! I'm all impatience to behold
The wondrous beauty—

King. The wondrous beauty—nay!
I said not beauty—it was not what men
Call beauty, that has thus enthralled my soul;
It was the spirit's loftier loveliness,
Unseen,—ethereal, and ineffable!
Which breathed from her pure lips—gave to her step
Its springing bound—her every movement lent
Its airy grace—pervaded her whole being—
Impregnated the air that kissed her robe,
And with an atmosphere of purity
Encircled her!

It was her voice whose music
No sorrow yet had touched—her childlike prattle,
By very artlessness made arch—her form,
Untortured to its light fragility
By court accessories of beauty's toilet—
Her affluent tresses, flowing unprofaned
By touch of mocking powder, which had lain
Upon their golden light, like fleecy clouds
Upon the sun!

Rich. Now, heaven be thanked, my liege!

No rhapsody so warm hath passed your lips
 A twelvemonth! Dulness ends her weary reign.
 'Tis plain this young enchantress will dethrone her.

King. In sooth, she shall! Richelieu, my friend, be prompt!

With speed let this new constellation shine
 Upon our court.—Some noble dame select,
 Beneath her high protection place this maid.
 Nor rank, nor title shall she lack, to gild
 Her lowly origin—

Enter VICTOR, L. U. E.
 and for the rest—

Vic. Your pardon, sire; the old woman—

King. What! is she come? Conduct her hither.

[Exit VICTOR, L. U. E.]

Now, Richelieu, use but your wonted skill, and we are
 once more your debtor.

Rich. Sire, you have but to speak—to wish, and
 though she were some chaste inhabitant of the moon,

Enter VICTOR, ushering DAME BABETTE, L. U. E.

[Exit VICTOR, L. U. E.]

the vestal dweller of some star, she should exchange its
 light for— *(Sees the Dame and starts back greatly moved.)*
 Heavens! Babette!

King. Why do you stare so? You don't mistake this
 curious relic of antiquity for the fair one who holds me in
 thralldom?

Rich. Not exactly—that is, precisely—I thought so!
 —that is, I never thought so. If it were but my own
 fancy that had conjured up this spectre! *[half aside.]*

King. Spectre? You are dreaming. The old lady ap-
 pears to us in a remarkably substantial condition.

Bab. (glancing nervously at the King and away again while she talks) I'm all over in a flutter. I suppose its
 my place to speak first, though I never talk. I see they
 feel just as frightened as I do. Dear me! how they stare,
 to be sure. If Blanche was only here, she'd wonder at the
 observation that some people sometimes attract. *(After an effort),*
 Gentlemen, I hope I do not confuse you. I'm
 really quite alarmed myself, before such well-dressed cava-
 liers. I was sent for here, but I say nothing, I never
 talk, as everybody knows. I was sent for, that's all—I

do'n't know why, so shall not say. (*King retires up, she crosses to Richelieu.*) If you could inform me, Sir, for I'm but a poor woman—I live down at the vil--lage yon--der—
[*as she is speaking the last words she looks very intently at Richelieu and gradually recognizes him.*]

Blessed Mother! it is Monsieur Antoine!

Rich. (*aside to her*) Silence, fool!

Bab. Silence, forsooth! as if I ever talk! Ah, Monsieur Antoine, to think of finding you here and dressed so grand.

Rich. Hush!

King. (*who has come forward attracted by Babette's exclamation*) Why, Richelieu, the old dragon seems to have recognized a friend!

Bab. Richelieu? Hey, what? Richelieu! (*Richelieu silences her by an action.*) Oh! I say nothing!

Rich. (*crosses c.*) Quite a ridiculous affair—ha, ha! (*trying to laugh.*) The old gentlewoman—ha, ha!—she actually fancies she has traced a likeness between me, and some relation who died in the last century, sire!

Bab. Sire! sire? His Majesty? Oh blessed Mary? Holy St. Dennis! And last night I talked in such a way—that is, I said nothing—I never talk—what will become of me! (*falling on her knees.*) Pardon—your Majesty—pardon! I did not know you—I never suspected you! And was it you last evening that—Oh, pardon! pardon!

King. Nonsense, my good woman; your breach of decorum will not put your head in jeopardy.

Bab. Oh! I hope not, your Majesty. (*rising*). Holy St. Anthony! My neck has grown quite stiff at the thought!

King. We leave you with the duke who will communicate our commands. [*Exit. R. 2 E.*]

Bab. Duke? Oh! Monsieur Antoine, are you a duke! and such a familiar way as I've treated you this many a year. If you will only condescend to pardon me! (*falling upon her knees again.*)

Rich. A truce to this folly. Rise and listen to me, Dame, for on your implicit obedience hangs your future welfare—perhaps your life.

Bab. Life! life! Oh! Surely you won't kill me? Monsieur Antoine—I mean your Grace, consider my years

—Mercy! mercy! Oh! my poor neck will be stiff for a year.

Rich. Be silent, and listen. You were walking last evening in these gardens with Blanche,—by what unlucky chance you came here—by what strange means obtained admission, I have not time to learn. The King saw Blanche—is enamoured of her—desires that she shall be presented at court.

Bab. Blessed Mary! what an honor! and I—his Majesty saw me too—of course his most gracious Majesty expects me to be presented also? Oh! I'm in such a flutter—how shall I live through it?

Rich. Are you determined to distract me? Blanche—

Bab. I understand—I understand—she is to be presented at court.

Rich. She shall die first?

Bab. Hey? what? die!

Rich. Yes, die!

Bab. Well, your Highness, I say nothing.—But little Blanche! To see her in her grave! And after all the fine learning you have given her! And to have her miss being presented at court too!—Why she always walked and talked—yes, when she was but two years old she walked like a queen—and since the King, his gracious Majesty, has so graciously looked upon her—

Rich. Ay!—he has looked on her! And that one look has like a flash of scathing lightning blasted her whole existence! (*crosses to R. H.*)

Bab. Well now I can't understand where's the harm.

Rich. Listen, Babette. The King has commissioned me to conduct Blanche to the palace—to-morrow evening is the latest moment to which I can postpone his orders—she must be saved from the profanation even of his suit, and the energy of my will alone can save her. You, and you only, can aid me—you *must*, you *shall* aid me! To-morrow morning at your cottage I will communicate my project, and I warn you that I shall exact the most implicit obedience.

Bab. And Blanche won't be presented at court? Nor I neither? My lord Duke, I to refuse such an honor! An honor that would make half the village die with envy!

Enter R. 2 E. KING and DUKE D'ANTIN.

Rich. (seizing her by the arm) Fool!
I tell you that Blanche never—never—(sees the KING—
suddenly releases Bubette, and changes his tone and manner)
never should refuse such a—such a distinguishing mark of
his Majesty's favor.

Bab. There now, that's just what I said, your highness,
and you would not listen to me. Just what I was telling
him, your Majesty! Such an honor for us both.—I am
ready to expire at the very thought! When Dame Barbara
knows it—but I say nothing—nobody shall hear it from me.

King. Why, Duke, this is a novel mode of proceeding.
It seems you were executing our orders by *force of arms!*

Rich. Your Majesty is facetious. This droll old woman
—ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing at her tenacity—
having conscientious scruples, she refused—

Bab. I? I refused? Refuse such an honor? Oh!
your Majesty—

Rich. (aside to her) Another word and it shall cost
you dear!

Bab. Oh! dear! how fierce Monsieur Antoine has grown
since he became a Duke!

King. There is some enigma here!

D'Antin. Which your Majesty may find diversion in
solving. (aside to him.)

Rich. Dame Babette, you will remember the directions
you have received, and to-morrow—

Bab. Then your mind is changed?—you consent?—
and to-morrow we shall have the honor—such an honor—
Oh! your Grace, when you forbade me just now, I felt—

King. Forbade you? Why, Richelieu, is the old wo-
man mad?

Rich. I believe so, sire.—I really believe so!—There,
you are at liberty to go. That way—that way. [*trying to
lead her towards the entrance, she takes a step
or two and persists in turning back.*]

Bab. Oh! I have not saluted his gracious Majesty!
[*breaks away from Richelieu, and curtsies
low to the King.*]

I wouldn't have your Majesty think me wanting in manners
—when I am to be presented at court too. Such an honor!
You see, Monsieur Antoine—that is, his highness—I can't
help calling him Monsieur Antoine, on account—

Rich. On account of the likeness. His Majesty knows—you tire his Majesty. Go! go! [*trying to force her away.*]

Bab. The likeness? What likeness? I beg pardon for fatiguing your Majesty. I was only going to say—

Rich. (*still forcing her*) His Majesty does not desire to hear. Go, go.

Bab. I am gone, soon as I have made my salute.

[*breaking from him, she curtsies again to the King, crosses, and going, returns.*]

The other grand-looking old gentleman—I have not made my reverence to him yet. Oh! I'll shew them breeding, now that I am to be presented at court! [*approaches Duke d'Antin and curtsies low.*]

Rich. Dame—

King. Nay, Richelieu, we are amused at her vagaries.

Rich. Oh, Sire! I see you are much annoyed.

Are you coming? [*to Babette.*]

Bab. But his Majesty says he is amused, and—

Rich. Come, come I say! [*Forcing her.*]

D'Ant. } But Richelieu—

King. }

Bab. His Majesty says he is amused!

Rich. Come! come!

[*KING and D'ANTIN, R. RICHELIEU forcing out BABETTE, L. who endeavours to return.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Room in the Cottage of DAME BABETTE, R. H. F. open door, L. H. F. large open window, shewing a country scene. Chamber door right and left. DAME BABETTE with a letter in her hand. JAQUELINE, seated on a low stool at window, making garlands of small green branches. Chairs and tables, jug and tin cup on table.

Bab. Well, well, the Duke must be obeyed—and I must say nothing of his being a Duke;—but no fear of that—I never talk. He will be here presently, and I must send for Blanche. Poor little Blanche, she will lose her May-day sport; but then the honor of receiving a Duke! Here, Jaqueline, child, throw down those garlands, run to the green, and tell Blanche she must hasten home directly.

Jaq. Not I, indeed, mother! Bid Blanche hasten home on May-day? I shan't think of such a thing. Besides, Blanche begged me to weave more garlands for the may-pole.

Bab. Never mind the garlands, chatterbox; go and tell Blanche she cannot dance upon the green to-day. I need her home.

Jaq. (still working at the garland) Just as if the villagers would let her go, mother! They can do nothing without Blanche! They would come and carry her away by force.

Bab. Stop talking, nimble-tongue! What a fondness these young ones have for chattering. Ah! they'll be as silent as I am when they grow old! There! (*snatching away the garland,*) leave the green things and go!

Jaq. Blanche won't come—I would'nt if I were she. Oh! I'll go; but Blanche shall have her garlands, if I make them on the road. (*gathers up the garlands.*) Who do you suppose would disappoint our Blanche? [*runs out door, off L.*

Bab. How fast the child talks! Where she got her fondness for chattering, I can't tell; her poor father was as silent as a post, and I'm sure its not from me.

Enter JAQUELINE, running, R. D. F.

Jaq. Didn't I tell you, mother, they would never let

Blanche come? She insisted, and the villagers insisted on coming along with her, and they intend to carry her away again. (*rustic music without.*) Hark! there is the music, they will be here in a moment.

Bab. The villagers coming here! Oh dear, Oh dear, I shall be ruined if the Duke finds them. Run, tell Blanche that I want her alone, and they must not enter. Tell her my poor neck—no, no,—tell her they must not come in.

Jaq. I'll tell her, but she wont mind; I would'nt if I were she. [*Exit. C. off L. R. D. F.*]

Bab. (*music*) There they come sure enough! Oh, dear, what shall I do to get rid of them! If the Duke finds them and gets angry, I shall die of fright! Oh! my poor neck—I shall never again be sure that I have it on my shoulders. Blanche! Blanche! Is Blanche coming?

[*Music, piano, through speech—stop at end of it.*]

Enter BLANCHE, R. D. F.

Blan. Yes, Dame, here is Blanche.

Bab. Good child! good child!

Blan. Nay, Dame, pay homage to our Majesty! I'm chosen Queen, dear Dame, the Queen of May! You do not smile—prithee, what serious thought Has cast its grave reflection on thy face?

Bab. I was thinking how beautiful a crown—a real crown—a crown of gold and jewels—would look upon your head.

Blan. A crown? Why you are dreaming, Dame, at mid-day!

Bab. And if I am, there's *something, sometimes*, in *some* dreams—but I say nothing—only wouldn't you like to dream of wearing such a crown.

Blan. No, in good sooth, not I! This woven band Of dewy wild flowers lightlier girds my head, And circles in its ring but happy thoughts! Then for my King—whom think you I have chosen!

Bab. Wait 'till you see the King himself.

Blan. Has he a nobler mien—a loftier look—
A braver, truer, purer heart than Armand?

Bab. Have you forgotten the cavalier who walked with us in the Gardens of Versailles?

Blan. No, I remember him,—'twas but last night.

Bab. Then listen, what would you say if he were the

King! the true King! Louis XV., the King of France!
Oh dear! what would you say to that?

Blan. Why if he were the King—in truth the King—
I could but say that wayward nature played
On fortune's favorite a most idle trick!
While to the humble artizan she gave
The aspect, soul, and bearing of a king!

Bab. Oh dear, Oh dear! what a young traitor! Its
very fine talk—yet for all that there's a great difference
between your Armand and the King—I mean the cavalier.

Blan. I grant you that, dear Dame, difference indeed!
How different seemed in each like attributes;
The lightness of the cavalier to me
Seemed senseless levity, while Armand's mirth
Is the o'erflowing gladness of a heart
At ease. Each had his separate pride—one pride,
The scorn that narrow minds from narrower minds
Inherit. But our Armand's pride looks down
In scorn upon mean acts alone—disdains
But falsehood—spurns but vice—rebels against
Injustice only—while he arrogates
No merit to his virtues! Men may bow
The knee to royalty, but there's a more
Enduring, and more sacred homage all
Must feel for what is *better than themselves!*

Bab. How these young ones talk to be sure! You'll
sing a new burden to your song before long. You must
think no more of Armand.

Blan. What—think no more of Armand? is he not
The very centre of my thoughts, round which
All feelings and all hopes alike revolve,
As planets circle round their sun? But, Dame,
Thou dear, mysterious and oracular Dame—
What boding dreams have mocked you through the night?
Or what portentous omens have you seen?
Nay, speak; prithee, what has befallen thee?

Bab. Oh, don't ask me.—I say nothing.—You know
I never talk.

(*Villagers without*) Where is our Queen? our Queen!
Bring us our Queen! [ARMAND and Villagers appear
at window.

Arm. (without) Patience, my friends, your patience while I seek her,
And for an instant tarry where you are!

Enter ARMAND lightly and quickly, R. D. F.

Arm. Blanche! Blanche! Queen Blanche! where are you dallying?

Your subjects grow rebellious to behold you!
Ah! who can wonder that they cannot live
From thy sweet sight! And I, the least of all.
Good-morrow Dame, they've sent me here to claim
Our faithless sovereign. Come, thou truant queen.

Bab. No such thing, *Monsieur Armand*; *Mam'selle* Blanche remains where she is.

Arm. Hey day! what next? *Monsieur Armand*, forsooth,
And *Mam'selle* Blanche! how courteous we have grown!
You're almost too polite *Madame* Babette!

Bab. *Mam'selle* Blanche cannot dance upon the green to-day.

Blan. Not dance, dear Dame, when I am chosen queen?
And I, in turn, have chosen Armand king!
Good Dame! dear Dame! indeed, but I must dance!

Arm. Are you possessed, my good *Madame* Babette?
The villagers would tear your cottage down.
Nonsense! Come, little queen, they wait for us.
The Dame is but our subject after all!
Obedience is her duty, and not ours.

Good-day, good Dame—good-day, *Madame* Babette!

[Puts his arm around the waist of Blanche, and is running with her to the door. Babette intercepts them, and leads Blanche away.]

Bab. (with great dignity) Stay where you are, Blanche,
I order you! You are to receive a visitor. The Duke will be here presently.

Arm. }
Blan. } The Duke!

Bab. Who said anything about a Duke? I'm sure I didn't! My foolish tongue. But it's just like me—that is, it's not at all like me—I never talk. I mean *Monsieur Antoine* will be here, and desires to see Blanche upon particular business. *Monsieur Armand*, I must request you to retire.

Arm. No; I remain to bid Monsieur Antoine
Make haste, and tell him we await our queen.

Bab. (angrily) Monsieur Armand, I tell you—

Blan. (crosses c.) Go, dear Armand, the Dame desires
it—go!

Come for me in an hour. May he, good Dame?

Say yes—now *do* say yes—you smile the *yes*—

You will not speak—and a consent is twice

Consent that with a smile is given. And now

Armand, for one short hour, we say farewell.

Arm. Sweet sovereign, I can scarcely disregard

Your first command, although this banishment

Is tyranny. “Farewell, I shall return

“Before our garlands wither, though to me

“Their freshness and their beauty vanish with

“The hands that wove them”—fare thee well, my Blanche!

Madame *Babette* and dignity, good day! [*Exit. R. D. F.*

Bab. Such wonders as I have to tell you!—such wonders!—but I shan’t say anything about it. Only suppose it was the King we saw at Versailles! I say suppose—and suppose that Monsieur Antoine was a great Lord! Only suppose—for I say nothing—I know how to hold my peace. Hark! I hear the wheels of a carriage. Go to your room, child, for I must speak with him alone. Go! Go!—

Blan. But, Dame, I’m only queen for one short day,

My crown may fade, my sceptre wither up

Before I use them—so I pray thee haste

To free me. You’ll remember? will you, Dame?

[*Exit into chamber, R. 2 E.*

Enter DUKE DE RICHELIEU, R. D. F.—comes down L. H.

Bab. Oh! dear, if she only knew that the King himself—a real King—Oh! your Highness, (*brings chair down c.*) the walls of my poor habitation are so honored by your presence that they—

Rich. Where is Blanche?

Bab. In her chamber, your Highness, waiting your *gracious pleasure*. They were just going to dance upon the green when I sent for her. Shall I summon her?

Rich. I first must speak to you—mark well my words! Blanche must be saved—the King must never more Behold her—to remove her secretly, Would be impossible—yet at the risk

Of life, be it her's or mine—or both—she shall
Not breathe the court's contaminating air.

Bab. But the honor, your Grace, the honor!

Rich. Be silent, woman! at your peril make
Ready to do my bidding.

Bab. Oh! How terrible these grand people are! Monsieur—I mean, my Lord, on my knees I swear to obey you!

Rich. That's well—since flight then is impossible,
Death only can protect her from the King—

Bab. Death! commit murder! Monsieur Antoine,
murder poor little Blanche? Oh! how terrible! But I
say nothing—what a Duke commands of course is right—
but death—Oh! my poor Blanche!

Rich. A seeming death may serve—so that the King
Shall think it real. There are drugs which produce
A sleep that seems the very twin of death,
Yet do not harm the sleeper. Take this phial,
Its contents have played servants to my wish
Before to-day: Blanche too must prove their power.
The liquid, look, is colorless: 'tis tasteless,
And not immediate in its influence.
Your part is to administer the draught.

Bab. Oh! no Monsieur Antoine, I dare not touch it,—
I shall never have courage.

Rich. You have already sworn, you shall abide
Your oath. Take it, I say: act cautiously,
And in your act be speedy.

Bab. This is to deal with great persons! What shall
I do? What shall I do?

Rich. Do as I command you—be quick and silent!

Bab. Silent, indeed! your Grace, as if I ever said
anything!

Blan. (*music*) [*opening the door.*]

May I come in? Dear Dame, the stirring sound
Of the glad music through my casement steals—
My feet dance to it of their own accord,
And threaten shortly to dance *after* it!
I give you warning, Dame!

Rich. Come hither, Blanche.

Blan. (*crosses to c.*) Monsieur Antoine—but is it you
indeed?

Your face and voice I know, or this rich garb

Had well disguised you—I could half believe
It was no jest, when Dame Babette declared
That Monsieur Antoine was a lord!

Bab. Ah! your Highness, excuse her—she will talk—
she won't learn to say nothing as I do. Blanche, control
that little tongue of yours, lest it give offence to his Grace,
the Duke—the Duke of Richelieu!

Blan. Richelieu! Oh! no—Richelieu that bold, bad man,
Monsieur Antoine whom I have known so long—
Have loved so well—the Duke de Richelieu—no—
That cannot be!— [sinks into chair.

Rich. Who taught the child this folly?

Bab. Oh! indeed, your Grace, I didn't—I never said
a word about it I'm sure.

Rich. Blanche—ha! she faints! Bring water and take this.
Fortune, I thank thee! Take it.

[hands her the phial unperceived by Blanche.

Bab. I dare not! I dare not!

Rich. Take it! Fool! (*imperatively*).

Bab. Oh! dear, I must! [takes the phial, goes to table,
pours out water and mixes the liquid with it.

Rich. Child, you are ill—

Blan. No, no, I am not ill—I was confused—
Stunned at the thought—don't heed me. I am well!

[Babette hands her the glass, turning away her head.
I do not need it, Dame.

Rich. (*taking the glass*) Drink, drink! your lips
Are quivering—you are fainting—drink! you must—
Must drink!

Blan. (*looks with surprise in his face, and calmly takes
the glass*) If you desire it, certainly— [drinks.

Rich. [*aside as she is drinking.*
(*laughing*) Richelieu, when did thy star abandon thee!

Blan. I do not understand—

Rich. Ay, but you shall!
Go, dance, they wait you on the green—

[crosses to Babette who stands motionless.

Why stand

You there as you were petrified? Come, rouse
Yourself. Bid her go dance—Fool! rouse yourself!
Sweet Blanche—go dance—light foot, and joyous heart!

The wise man cogs the dice and laughs at fate. (*aside*)

[R. D. F. *exit hastily, off R.*

Blan. Why, Dame—why do you stand so motionless?
Why gaze upon me thus with that fixed look
Of wondering terror? Dame,—dear Dame Babette,
Will you not speak? pray you—do speak to me!

Bab. (*recovering, throws herself weeping upon Blanche's neck*) My poor, poor Blanche!

Blan. Poor Blanche? nay Dame, I needs must laugh at that.

Bab. You seemed so happy!

Blan. When did I—do I *seem* the thing I *am*!
Seem happy—how could I seem otherwise?

'Tis happiness to me to live—to be!

My very instincts—nay, the very use
Of every separate sense by which we hold
Communion visible with external being
Is happiness! To gaze upon the sky
Arched in blue glory o'er my upturned head—
The forms of beauty, called by loving spring
Out of the affluent bosom of the earth;
The sun, beneath whose warm, resplendent light
All nature teems: these simplest, daily things,
Which custom cannot strip of loveliness,
To look on these is to be happy!—is
To feel my bosom swell with gratitude
To him who made them, to make us more blest!

Bab. Oh! Blanche! Blanche!

[*music heard at a distance.*

Blan. Hark! 'tis the villagers; they come for me,
And Armand, too, expects his queen. Good Dame,
My subjects must not wait. Adieu! Adieu! [*going.*

Bab. Blanche! Blanche! My child! my kind, light-
hearted child, embrace me. Do not go until you've said
that you forgive me.

Blan. (*embracing her*)

Forgive you, Dame! What crime have I to pardon,
Except, indeed, too doting love for me.

What ails you? You are weeping? What's the matter?

Bab. No, no, I'm not—I'm not weeping. Oh, my
darling Blanche!

[*bursts into tears.*

Blan. Can I have wounded you, dear Dame?

Bab. Wound me? Did you ever wound a fly? I've seen you brush away with careful hand the very insect that had stung you. (*Music without.*) They are coming for you. Go to the green. Go, go.

Blan. First, with a kiss, let me seal up the fountains Of those dear eyes, where tear and smile contend, Like April sun and rain, they know not why. Now for my crown and sceptre. Dame, adieu!

[*As* BLANCHE *is running off* ARMAND *appears at the door.* [*Exeunt* R. D. F.]

Bab. Blessed mother, guard her! That dreadful drug! If harm comes to her, I shall never know a happy hour! Oh, this it is to deal with grand people. Yet for all that, he is a duke; and to be sure, what a duke says must be right. How could a duke do anything wrong?

[*Exit into chamber, R.*

SCENE II.

Village green. A maypole in the centre dressed with long garlands hanging to the ground. JAQUELINE, ETIENNE, JACOT, and Villagers busied about it. Music playing. Several Villagers as musicians, with pipes and tabors.

Jac. Give another look towards old Babette's cottage, Etienne, and tell us if you see our queen.

Etién. I see two figures yonder, through the trees. They turn this way. Yes, 'tis Blanche, and Armand is with her.

Jac. Then hurrah for the dance, hurrah for the king and the queen! Finish with your garlands, and let us dance.

Enter ARMAND *and* BLANCHE R. U. E.

Arm. Ay, for a dance, make ready, lads and lasses, And be your hearts as light as are your feet, In honor of the May. [*Blanche puts her hand to her head and appears to be ill.*

Blanche, you are ill!

Your eyes are heavy, and your cheek how pale!

Blan. Oh! no, no, Armand; I am well—quite well. And yet I think my very happiness Oppresses me; a faintness steals upon

My yielding sense, as if it were the languor
Of a content so perfect, it could wish
For nothing on this earth it hath not now,
But on the far-off future shuts its eyes.

Arm. Our future, Blanche! It must indeed be bright
To vie in promise with the present joy!
We live in that which *is*, and so defy
What *may* be. Let the unknown future bring
Us years—long years of unimagined woe.—
It cannot steal the lustre from these hours,
“Whose very memory would irradiate
“The darkest, time and fate can hold in store!”

Blan. “How should the placid current of our lives
“Bear aught but flowers upon its laughing tide?
“And yet, I sometimes think to see it ruffled.
“Thou and thy state, Armand, are not akin;
“And thy ambition wakes my fear—Yet why!—
“Why should he feel ambition to be *great*,
“Whose nobler struggle, in a nobler strife,
“Has made him *good*.”

Arm. “My nature is not cast,
“Sweet Blanche! in mould so true and pure as thine
“Ambition winds itself about the root
“Of every vigorous mind. Ambition gives
“The startling impulse to its higher action!
“Ambition spurs it on—sustains—inspires!
“And, rear the better beacon which shall guide
“Ambition’s course aright, it is no more
“A vice!”

Blan. “Ah! when I listen to thee, Armand,
“I tremble lest the artizan’s poor garb
“Should hide the warrior’s danger-loving heart.”

Arm. “Nay, Blanche, to love my country with my soul
“Is nor to love the warrior’s perils—nor
“His triumphs.—All men, be they high or humble,
“Owe to the land that gives them birth a tribute!
“And with his talents man may pay the debt,
“Or with his industry, or with his blood!”

Blan. “Oh, never with the last! I could not live
“And see thee pay it! How is this? we both
“Are grave, though this bright morn would bid us think
“Of gladness only. Come, my king, be sure

"That I shall chide thee, if I trace a shadow

"Upon thy brow."

Arm.

"And shall I not chide thee

"For that white lip and cheek, on which the rose

"So lately bloomed?" Come, let us dance, my queen!

To quicken in thy veins the timid blood,

And stain these lilies with a healthier red.

Jacot, Etienne, are you not ready yet?

Jac. Most excellent and worthy sovereigns! we but wait your pleasure.

Arm. Now, Blanche, for thy light foot. Come, lads, a dance!

[*Maypole dance with garlands. Towards the close, BLANCHE appears to grow fatigued, and falls suddenly in ARMAND'S arms, as if fainting.*]

Blan. Armand, I cannot—I am weary—stay—

Arm. Thou weary, Blanche; whose airy foot were match For the blithe humming bird's untiring wing?

Great Heaven! How pale thou art! thou tremblest, too!

Blan. 'Tis only weariness—so—let me rest.—(*falls, c.*)

My head is strangely heavy, and before

My eyes a floating vapour spreads itself.

Armand, I scarce can see thee.—Art thou there?

Arm. Blanche! Blanche! my own, my only love!

Oh, Heaven! she grows more ghastly white. Etienne!

Quick, fly for help,—and Jaqueline bring Babette!

[*Exeunt JAQUELINE and ETIENNE, R. U. E.*]

How cold thou art! Speak to me, Blanche! thou hearest me?

Tell me thou hearest me!

Blan.

Yes, Armand, yes,

I hear thee, my beloved, yet I feel—

That we are parting—death—

Arm.

We cannot part!

This is not death! no, no, we will not part!

Blan. Nay, Armand, war not thou with heaven's high will!

Death cannot break the bond that knits our souls!

Shall I not be thy bride—there—where I go

To wait thee? For awhile we needs must part!—

Death's icy finger chills and clogs my blood,

Like frost it falls upon my heavy eyes—

And yet I seem to see! A luminous mist

Envelopes all things round me—through its veil

A threshold paved with light appears—beyond,
A land of flowers—and *now* bright forms in robes
Of radiant white are flitting round me—ah!
They bear me from thee. Armand! Oh! Armand!
I cannot see thee—though I feel thine arms
Girdle my frozen limbs!

Arm. Thou wilt not leave me,
Distract me not—but once more speak—let me
Once more drink in the music of thy voice!
Speak to me! Give me one last proof of love.

Blan. Armand—I do—this— [*raises herself with an effort, feebly kisses him and sinks back apparently dead.*]

Arm. 'Twas her first kiss!
Thou pitying heaven,—let it not be her last!
She is not dead! dost thou not hear me, Blanche?
No, no, she is not dead! It were to lose
The sun that warms with life—to lose the light
That tells the presence of that sun,—it were
To lose the air we breathe, to lose thee, Blanche!
I stifle at the thought! My life's sole light
Is endless darkness now—Oh! Blanche, my Blanche!
My earth and heaven! all peace—all joys—all dreams—
All blessings, and all hopes, are gone with thee!

[*Flings himself upon the ground beside BLANCHE. Peasants group around them. Tableau. Slow Curtain.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Antechamber in the Palace of Versailles.

Enter LE SAGE L. and VICTOR R.

Vic. Monsieur Le Sage! our dear Monsieur Le Sage! We are overwhelmed by the sight of his Majesty's affliction. One moment he is like an angry child disappointed of its plaything, the next a very woman deluged in tears. But we can sympathize with him; we know the pangs which a passion for th' illusive sex too surely inflicts. We have suffered ourselves.

Le Sage. Possibly.

Vic. His Majesty's new despondency will once more shed a gloom over the whole court.

Le Sage. Inevitably!

Enter DUKE D'ANTIN, R. 1 E.

D'Ant. Le Sage!

Le Sage. Instantaneously, your Highness.

D'Ant. My words are for your ear alone.

Vic. We shall withdraw, my Lord. [*retires up R.*]

D'Ant. The young peasant is dead.

Le Sage. Definitively!

D'Ant. A death so sudden, so improbable, so unaccountable, excites mistrust. If the report be false,—I have my doubts, vague and unconfirmed, still I doubt her death. The King must be persuaded to visit old Babette's cottage, and himself behold the corse, if corse there be. This boyish page can at all times gain the ear of Louis. Often when the voices of our most powerful courtiers were unheeded, his suggestions have received attention. You comprehend me?

Le Sage. Distinctly!

D'Ant. His Majesty must cross this antechamber when he leaves his apartment. You will remain here and see that the opportunity is not lost?

Le Sage. Decidedly!

D'Ant. I shall be in the gardens an hour hence (*crosses L.*) You will join me there. [*Exit L. 1 E.*]

Le Sage. Punctually!

Vic. (coming forward, L.) We consider his Grace the Duke d'Antin the most sombre person of *our* acquaintance.

Le Sage. Incontestably and indubitably!

Vic. Henceforth his Majesty may prove as sombre. Alas! unhappy King!

Le Sage. Appropriately—has his Majesty taken a last farewell of the poor little peasant?

Vic. We believe not.

Le Sage. Undeniably his Majesty listens to your voice, when he is *deafly* disposed to all others?

Vic. You flatter *us*.

Le Sage. Had I been you I should *urgently* have persuaded him to behold her once more.

Vic. It never occurred to *us*; and you think *we* should do so?

Le Sage. Seriously; but the Duke de Richelieu would *inevitably* object.

Vic. Monsieur Le Sage, learn that *we* can overrule the Duke.

Le Sage. Profoundly credulous as are my inclinations, I must consider that assertion *incredibly* dubious.

Vic. (roused) We will give you proof, Monsieur Le Sage,—*incontestably—incontrovertibly—indisputably—indubitably* multiplied proof. The King shall visit the Dame's cottage this very day, and Richelieu shall be kept in ignorance of his movements.

Le Sage. Unavoidably I shall believe when *unexpectedly* I see. But look how opportunely his Majesty approaches. I leave you *experimentally* to disprove or confirm your asseverations. [crosses L.]

Vic. Do you mean to doubt, Monsieur Le Sage, that we shall do the latter?

Le Sage. Indubitably, and I trust *inoffensively*. [Exit L. H.]

Vic. We deem that a malicious aspersion upon our character.

Enter King R. 1 E., and is pensively crossing the stage.
Your Majesty,—

King. Victor, is it you? I scarcely know a face, save yours, boy, I could to-day endure about me.

Vic. We are com— Your Majesty compliments me.

Alas! Sire, your grief has fallen heavily upon *our*—upon my heart.

King. One by one have all life's joys been snatched away from me, and now to *lose* her too,—never to see her more.

Vic. Might not your Majesty find your sorrow assuaged by the sight of her still unchanged loveliness? Will your Majesty deign to listen to the humblest of your subjects? If you could but be persuaded to visit the Dame's cottage, —*We* have a—*I* have a presentiment that you will find a sad consolation in the effort.

King. What matters it whither I go? The very wind that blows upon me can urge me on or draw me back. I have lost all impulses of my own.

Vic. Your Majesty then will grant my petition?

King. I care not to refuse it.

Vic. And your Majesty will permit *us*—that is *me*, to be your sole attendant? Your sorrow would be desecrated by the presence of those that did not share it.

King. Even so. The very thought of beholding her once again—beholding her even in the frosty arms of death, reanimates me. Yes, we will go,—and instantly.

[*Exit R. H.*

Vic. (aside) Monsieur Le Sage, we shall convict you of being *philosophically* and *adverbially* incorrect. We attend your Majesty.

[*Exit R. H.*

SCENE II.

A chamber in DAME BABETTE'S Cottage. Set doors, R. & L.

1st E. In the centre a Couch upon which BLANCHE is extended apparently dead. White flowers upon her brow and in her hands. A white wreath hung at the foot and at the head of the bed. At the head, a table covered with white, holding twelve candles in the form of a cross, eleven lighted and one extinguished. Around the couch, a group of Village Maidens. JAQUELINE, kneeling at the foot. ARMAND, standing at the head.

Arm. Jaqueline,—my friends,—grant what I ask.—Leave me awhile alone with her. You loved her well,—But I—I—

[*bursts into tears.*

Jaq. Our Blanche never denied a request of yours, Armand, nor will we who loved her so dearly do so.

[Exit slowly and sorrowfully, followed by all the maidens.]

Arm. (after gazing awhile on BLANCHE.)

Oh! Blanche! my own—though lost—still, still my own!
A little while I yet may gaze on thee,
And in the treasury of my soul may store
The memory of each stiff'ning lineament
Where beauty lingers still! "It cannot be!
"Shall those soft eyes no more look into mine,
"Nor veil themselves when with too bold a joy
"I gazed within their azure depths? shall love,
"With its aurora, tint thy cheek no more?
"The low, glad music of thy voice, no more
"Sunder those gentle lips, with words that fell
"Like blessings on the ears that took them in?
"My Blanche! my other and my better self!
"How weary seems the path I thought to climb
"Thy hand in mine,—thy smile to light me on,
"Thy sunny presence to make glad each step!
"Alone life's burden must be borne—alone
"The struggling heart crush underneath its weight!"
A holy smile yet hovers on thy face,
As though the angels, when they summoned thee,
One golden glimpse of Paradise revealed,
And left that happy print upon thy lip.
No, no! thou art not lost—we are not parted!
For Heavenward as my tearful eyes I turn,
A radiant vision meets them there, and bids
Me guard my soul, unsullied by a deed
That could divide us in that land of joy!
My heart hath but one wish—my life one hope—
All time one joy—that of rejoining thee!

[Sinks at the head of the couch, and buries his head in his hands.]

Enter VICTOR, ushering in the KING, L. D. 1 E.

[Exit VICTOR, L. D.]

King. A secret awe has paralyzed my limbs—
I scarcely dare—(approaching the couch, perceives ARMAND)
Ha! what is this! a youth
O'erwhelmed with grief, kneeling beside her corse?

They said she had no kin. Young man, rise up :
What sorrow bows thee thus?

Arm. It lies before you !

King. This maiden, surely was no kin of thine?

Arm. No kin; yet more, far more, than kin could be !
Alike, we never knew those tender ties
Of kinship, which link man to man—yet all—
A father's, mother's, sister's, brother's place,
Each in the other's soul had trebly filled !

King. You loved her then?

Arm. Loved her? the earliest page
In memory's record held but that young love.
From boyhood up to youth—from youth to manhood—
Each tenderer thought—sublimier aspiration—
And purer hope was woven with that love.
Our very natures blended as we grew,
My spirit, gentleness from her's imbibed,
And her's its strength and vigor caught from mine !
Our childish tears upon each other's breast
Were ever shed. Our childish laughter rang
The changes of its mingling mirth together,
And in each other's joy all childhood's blessings
Were mirrored—magnified—and multiplied !

King. Tell me thy name?

Arm. Armand ! I have no other !

King. Thy parentage?

Arm. I know it not; a foundling
By strangers reared, I am the people's child !
From them I know not that I spring, yet would
Believe so; for I ask no name save that
Myself shall win. I bless the generous fate
That gave no noble blood to swell my veins,
For had I from the hands of accident
Nobility received, I could not prove
My juster title to that high noblesse
No revolutions level and destroy :
The true noblesse of genius and of worth.

King. Would'st thou not serve thy country?

Arm. With my sword

Or with my life.—She gave it—should she need it,
'Tis hers !

King. " Well answered.—Dost thou love thy King?

Arm. "At least I love all virtues of all men!
 "Upon the loftier height the man is placed,
 "His virtues more resplendent shine—his vices
 "More hideous seem—the virtues of my King
 "Above the virtues of more common men—
 "I prize for they have wider sphere of good.

King. "Thy speech is something less than frank.

Arm. "I meant

"It frankly; I have never yet had cause
 "To blush for my free thoughts, why should I hide them?

King. Thy boldness pleases me; Armand, to day
 Thy King saddles for Fontenoye.—Join thou
 His battle line, and in the warrior ranks,
 Where sure distinction must on valour wait,
 Upon the beaten foeman's banner write
 The name thy worth shall win.

Arm. My heart leaps up
 Even at the thought.—My choice had asked no more—
 To die in battle for my country!—What
 Is left me on this earth to live for now?

King. Nay, live, that I may cancel valour's claim
 With noble meed.

Arm. Who then art thou?

King. Thy King!

Arm. (*kneeling*) My liege!

King. Aha! thy words are free, and yet
 Thy knee *can* bend, it seems.

Arm. When Duty bids
 My liege, it is as proud to bend, as when
 To all compulsion it disdains to bow.

[*Pause.*]

King. Arise, Armand; the King but seldom sees
 His subjects' hearts unveiled. I value thine
 Because I trust it. Hence, without delay;
 At noon the Captain of my Guard will know
 My wishes—seek him at that hour thou;
 When next we meet, be it at Fontenoye!

Arm. My liege, not with my lips, but with my sword
 My gratitude shall thank thee! [*going, returns.*]

Must I leave

Thee, Blanche? But no, I will return to take
 One last farewell. My liege, at Fontenoye
 My arm shall prove my words. At Fontenoye! [*Exit L. 1 E.*]

King. (approaching the couch, and gazing at Blanche)
 How potent is the sight of thee, O death!
 In quelling ruder passions. Had she lived
 I should have crushed this man, her lover, like
 A worm beneath my foot! Bereft of Blanche,
 His woe, is mine—and sympathy would seem
 To level me half-way to him, or raise
 Him to half-fellowship with me! [*goes to couch.*
 How passing fair! The hand of death itself
 Hath only robed her in new loveliness!

Enter RICHELIEU, L. 1 E.

[*after advancing a step in the room,
 he starts at beholding the King.*

Rich. (aside) His Majesty! great heaven, how came
 he hither?

The hour of her reviving must be near.

Nay, at this very moment animation

May to her dormant form return.—All's lost

Unless—Your Majesty— [*approaching him.*

King. Ah! Richelieu, look!

Rich. This vain indulgence of your sorrow, sire,
 Is to yourself injurious.

King. Richelieu—no—

Look—death itself hath lost its wonted terrors,

Touching her beauty but to borrow it!

Death, did I say? It doth not seem like death!

Rich. (much agitated) Not seem like death? I pray
 your Majesty,

Permit me, sire—let me conduct you hence.

♦ *King.* Not yet—not yet.

Rich. I do implore you, sire—

King. How came the scythe to mow this lily down
 So soon—so suddenly—so timelessly!

How know I, but the same unholy means

That robbed me of the beauteous Chateauroux,

Again have snatched away the thing I loved?

If 'twere so, my rage—

Rich. Nay, good my liege,

Poison had left its blackening trace.

King. True, true,

It could not be. Oh, holy Powers! what's this?

Her lifeless hand—is it the warmth of mine

That lends it thus a heat unnatural?
No death-like ice is here—'tis scarcely cold!

Rich. Confusion! she revives! (*aside*) My liege, my liege,
These cheating phantasies—Your fevered brain—
Pardon—but you must hence!

King. Surely a tinge
Of faintest rose is spreading o'er her cheek!

Rich. Sire, for the love of Heaven—

King. Saw you not that?
Her spotless drapery stirs—her bosom heaves—

Rich. [*passing between the KING and BLANCHE so
as to prevent his seeing her.*]

There is no warmth—no tint of red—no breath—
It was the air that dallied with her robe!
She's dead! Your reason, sire—pardon this force
Which love emboldens me to use.—I fear
To see your reason by these phantasies
Unsettled!

King. Ay, it is, or will be soon!
I cannot think her dead.—I saw her move—
Look! look! she breathes!

Rich. Nay, sire, your reason wanders.

[*hurries him to the door.*]

King. I cannot leave her thus.—But one last look!

[*turning back.*]

Rich. My liege, not for the universe—not one!

[*Exit, forcing out the KING, L. 1 E.*]

Blan. (*gradually reviving*)

They part—they leave me—further, further still
They softly float,—dimmer and dimmer grow
The bright celestial forms.—Sing on, sing on.—
Close not my ears to those seraphic strains!
They cease—the angel visions fade—all's hushed!

[*gazing round her surprised.*]

'Tis our own cottage! all the rest has vanished!
The tuneful voices—and the fitting shapes,
Where are they? Flowers upon my brow—spring flowers
Within my hand? Ah! I remember now,
'Twas May-day—I was chosen queen—we danced,
And then—Armand—in Armand's arms I swooned!
Where is he? (*rising.*) I am weary—and how feeble!
Could I but see Armand! where lingers he?

Enter RICHELIEU, L. 1 E.

Monsieur Antoine—Monsieur—but no—what was't
They told me? all my thoughts are so confused—
These flowers recall—'Tis May-day, is it not?

Rich. It was so yesterday. May-day is past!

Blan. 'Tis strange! how could the hours so swiftly fly?
Did they not tell me you were now a Duke?

Rich. The Duke of Richelieu, and 'tis even so!

Blan. Ah! were it any other Duke—

Rich. Enough!

Your lips should be the last to breathe my name
In other tone than that of reverent love!

With calmness hear me—four and twenty hours,

Nay more, you've lain upon that couch in sleep

So silent and profound that all but I

And Dame Babette believe you dead!

Blan. [*turning and gazing in astonishment at the couch, &c.*]

Dead! dead!

Rich. Aye, dead! and dead to all but us
You must remain, for reasons that demand
And justify the harmless cheat!

Blan. No cheat

Is harmless, and—

Rich. Of that not thou, but I
Am judge. All is prepared for flight—this hour
You will be borne to a far-distant home.

Blan. My lord, I own I have been used to bow
With reverence to your words.—I knew you then
But as an humble citizen, the friend
And guardian of a child, who had, alas!
No guardian else but heaven! I loved you—
I obeyed you—for, my lord, you never asked
What in obeying I obeyed not heaven!
I know you now as—Richelieu! And your first
Request should make me shrink from you! My lord,
You bid me stoop to falsehood—I refuse!

Rich. No more—thy words as little move my will
As winds the rocks. Prepare thou to obey!

Blan. Not that command which in my conscience finds
No quick response. I know your power, my lord,
I also know the strength of a resolve

Which mine own heart approves. Nay—spare your threats—
They fright me not—I never learnt to fear!

Rich. Learn then my right to claim and to enforce
Compliance to my wish—it is the right
Of a determined *father* o'er a child!

Blan. A father?

Rich. This very day completes the weary round
Of twenty years, since from her friends and kin
Thy mother fled.—In secret we were wed.
Two years she lived unknown,—and died the hour
Thy infant head was pillowed on her breast!
My child! the sins of Richelieu are not few,
“And every eye is quick to magnify,
“And every voice is loud to trumpet them.”
Yet one—one ray of virtue, like a beam
Of sunshine stealing in a lazar-house,
Amongst them dwells; it is his love for *thee*!

Blan. (*throwing herself in his arms*) My father!

Rich. Ah, though Richelieu claims that title,—
Richelieu from whom so late you trembling shrank,
My child, thou wilt not banish from thy lips
That tender name.

Blan. No, *father*! it is not
For me, even were I not thy child, to judge thee.
But Armand, dear Armand, knows he not this?

Rich. Armand is henceforth nought to Richelieu's
daughter.

Blan. My father, oh! my father, leave me still
My poverty—leave me my humble state—
Take back a father's name—a father's *love*,
For lack of which, the first warm tears that scorched
My infant eyes were shed;—but rob me not
Of Armand. Hark! it is his step. He comes.

[*as she is springing to meet him* RICHELIEU
seizes her.

Rich. Hush! not a word. This folly must end here.

Arm. (*without*) Babette! Babette! 'tis I.

Blan. Armand! Armand!

Rich. Obey my will,—this way with me—no cry!

[*hurrying her to her chamber, R.*

Resistance would be useless.—Girl, bethink thee,
It is thy *father* that commands. [at the last word.]

he releases her arm, BLANCHE bows her head and passes before him. Exeunt R. l E.

Enter ARMAND, L.

Arm. One more
Farewell,—the last, and all is over! Gone!—
Why have they borne her hence? It was the sole
Sad pleasure which I craved, but once again
To look upon her.—It is better thus.
I would not be unmanned anew!

Blan. (in a faint voice within) Armand!

Arm. It was her voice! Oh, Heaven! the voice of
Blanche!

Angelic spirit, didst thou breathe my name?
Or is it thou—vain torturer, Fancy—thou—
Her voice! henceforth each wind that sweeps the earth
Will waft it to my ear—rock, wood, and glen
Repeat the sound, and all melodious tones
Those well-known accents imitate! “Her form
“Will paint itself upon the empty air,
“The fleecy clouds will take no other shape,
“And all things beauteous in that mould divine
“Seem cast.” My thoughts will madden me! and yet
I cannot tear myself away. Each dear
Familiar object, by her touch so hallowed—
The casement where she watched till I should come—
Yon couch where last she lay in dreamless slumber—
And these—

*(gathering up the flowers which
BLANCHE has dropped.*

these flowers that in unconscious sweetness
Bloomed in her death-cold hand, and that shall now
Wither upon my breast as she has withered,
But dwell there as she dwells in spite of death.
All, all, with blended voices, strangely real,
Would seem to bid me stay! would chain me here,
As though with cords invisible they bound
Me still to hope and her! Away! away!
My nature grows too soft. Farewell for aye
My early dreams—farewell my ideal world,
Peopled by joy and hope—farewell for ever! [*Exit L. l E.*
*(as he rushes out, the door of BLANCHE's cham-
ber opens, and she breaks from RICHELIEU,
who is endeavouring to withhold her.*

Blan. Armand, come back. 'Tis Blanche. She lives!

Rich. My child!

Hold, I command thee!

Blan. Call me not thy child!

Oh! what to me are nature's chance-knit ties
To those that with rude hand thou sunderest now?

It is the *spirit's* purer, stronger bonds
Through life—through death—to all eternity

Unchanging, holy, indestructible,—

That join my soul to Armand! Part us not!

My father—Oh, my father, part us not.

[*falls at the feet of RICHELIEU.*
Quick curtain.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Room in an Hotel in Paris. BABETTE and JAQUELINE.

Bab. Well, here we are in Paris again. Out of that old gloomy convent at last!

Jaq. Only to think of Mam'selle Blanche managing to get us all free, though she did take five years about it. Now how did she contrive to do that?

Bab. By *talking*, child; it was all done by talking. Ah! she has a tongue could wheedle an angel out of its wings; though, for my part, I think it best to be silent.

Jaq. Why would she come to Paris? I'm sure I wouldn't have.

Bab. That's her affair. You know she will have her own way, and does with us all just what she pleases. She heard that the King was holding his court in Paris, and thought that her father, the Duke de Richelieu—Oh, dear, to think that the father of our little Blanche should be a Duke! what an honor, though he did shut her up in a convent, and made all the villagers believe that she was dead—well, she thought the *Duke, her father*, must be in Paris too, so she chose to come here. And do you know that Blanche has written twice to the Duke and told him where we are.

Jaq. Perhaps the letters won't reach him! I hope they won't.

Bab. Won't they though? One of them will reach him sure enough, for whom do you think I gave it to this very morning?—But no matter, I shan't say anything about it.

Jaq. Well don't, mother, for its all one, if the letter is sure to reach him. That's the very way to make her tell all about it.

Bab. Reach him? Why, Monsieur Le Sage said he'd put it in the Duke's own hands. I came upon our old friend, Le Sage, all of a sudden, just in front of this very house. And how glad the good man was to see me! so I told him all our adventures.

Jaq. What! You told him everything?

Bab. That is, I told him nothing. He asked me an hundred questions—but I never talk, so I said nothing.

Jaq. Hark! There is a knock.

Bab. Oh, dear! oh, dear! it is the Duke himself. What shall I do? My neck grows so stiff again, just as it always does when I think of him.

Jaq. Nonsense, mother—don't be afraid of him—I wouldn't. And I'm sure he can't alarm Mam'selle Blanche very easily.

Bab. That's true, send her here, for I shall never have courage to face him.

Jaq. But I would! so would Mam'selle Blanche; you'll see how quietly she'll look at him. I'll warrant he'll be glad enough to look away—just wait till she comes!

[*Exit JAQUELINE, R. l E.*

Enter DUKE of RICHELIEU, L. l E., BABETTE curtsies very low and looks much frightened.

Rich. So! it is indeed you, and you are here in Paris, in spite of all my precautions.

Bab. Well I believe it is I, your eminence—and I believe I am here—but it was all Mam'selle Blanche; you see, your highness, she can do what she pleases with everybody. I hope you won't blame me, for indeed—

Rich. Enough of this—how does Blanche?

Bab. Ah, very badly indeed—she pines for Armand night and day—but I forget, your highness does not know who Armand is.

Rich. Know him? I would to heaven I knew him not! The peasant-colonel! Villiers' aid de camp!

The king's new favorite! fortune's chosen minion!

No battle but Distinction and Success,

Like unseen genii, wait upon his steps;

Upon the field he saved his monarch's life,

And when the king, too weakly generous,

Would have ennobled him, the nameless peasant

Refused in scorn all title save the one

His sword had won him.—Let him rise awhile;

The higher pinnacle, the greater fall!

Bab. O dear, O dear! what will Mam'selle Blanche say to all this?

Rich. Blanche say? Dare thou to breathe a single word

Of that my thoughtless folly has revealed,
 And in a dungeon's, not a convent's, walls,
 Shall your next tale be told. (*crosses R.*) She's here, retire!

[*Exit BABETTE, L. 1 E.; enter JAQUE-
 LINE, who exits with BABETTE.*

Enter BLANCHE, R.

Blan. My lord Duke! [*Pauses and looks at him.*

Nay, my father! can I choose
 But call thee by that name? though in thy face
 Too little of a father's fondness greets me!

Rich. Yield thou the meet obedience of a child,
 And all a father's fondness will requite it!

Blan. Command thou what a child's pure heart must leap
 To execute, and I will yield a child's
 Obedience, with the meekness of a child.

Rich. What I have done was for thy surest good.
 Ay! for thy *soul's* best good!

Blan. My soul's best good!
 Was't for my soul's best good my tongue should mock
 The consecrated altar with a lie?
 Was't for my soul's best good my lips should breath
 A vow my heart refused? the holy oath
 Which gave the thought, the hope, the love to heaven,
 Which were no longer mine to give!

Rich. Daughter!
 Thy will opposed to mine is powerless!

Blan. My father, tempt me not to evil—think
 Before you act! young blood is warm—young heads
 Are rash—young hearts, convulsed like mine, are stubborn!
 When love—the soul's first love and last—the love
 No absence changes, and which time and sorrow
 Chastise to strengthen—is too fiercely curbed,
 Its passion breaks all other ties—defies
 All chances and all perils—leaps all barriers,
 That hold or part it from its idol—or
 Dragged by a chain too mighty to the earth,
 The iron eats its slow and silent way
 Into the soul—and then—we *die*—my father!

Rich. I know thy sex too well, girl, at its tears
 Or wrath to change my purpose,—woman's grief
 Is wind and rain one summer hour will end.

Blan. And canst thou thus the name of woman scorn,

Her holy mission lightly look upon ;
 Nor think that thy first sighs were soothed by her?
 Thy first tears kissed away by woman's lips—
 Thy first prayer taught thee at a woman's knee—
 Thy childhood's blessings shower'd from woman's hand—
 Thy manhood brightened by her watching smile—
Thy age must in her tenderness find prop—
 And life's last murmurs may perchance burst forth
 Where they began—upon a woman's breast?

Rich. I nor deny her virtues, nor her power
 To gild them with her tongue. But one word more
 Of Armand. Woman *may* be constant—when
 Was man? what wouldst thou think? how wouldst thou act
 If Armand's troth were plighted to another?

Blan. Another? Armand love and Armand wed
 Another? No! the present could not thus
 Belie the past! Yet is it true he thought—
 Still thinks me dead; but death could only *part*,
 Not *disunite* us! Armand love another—
 Oh wretch! to wrong his memory with the thought!
 Armand has not forgotten me—'tis false!
 Tell me 'tis false! and for the life you give
 Me back, I'll bless thee more than for the life;
 I had at first from thee!

Rich. In calmer tone
 One question I would have thee answer—listen.
 If I could give thee proof unquestionable,
 Would'st thou the cloister seek of thy free will?

Blan. I would.

Rich. Swear that thou wilt!

Blan. There needs no oath.
 I know not falsehood, father.

Rich. I believe thee.
 To night I will return—remember thou
 Thy words—to night!

Exit L. 1. E.

Blan. Armand! was it for this
 For five long years I hoped—for this I bore
 With patient trust the ill's fate heaped upon me!
 For this I would not wrong thee by a doubt!
 All—all—for this—this hour of agony!

[*Sinks weeping upon a couch, and
 after a pause rises calmly.*]

Let me not murmur at thy high decrees,
 All-wise, all-watching, and all-guarding Heaven!
 I know no withered leaflet falls to earth—
 No blade of grass bursts from its sheath of green;—
 No grain of sand is swallowed by the wave—
 Unnoted by that ruling Providence
 That guides the universe, yet stoops to clothe
 The flower with beauty! And from seeming ills
 Works out our truest, most enduring good!
 "Oh! then while grass, and sand, and leaf are cared for,
 "How shall a mortal doubt thy guardianship!"
 Then break not heart! the will of Heaven be thine!

Enter JAQUELINE, L. 1 E.

Jaq. Oh! Mademoiselle Blanche! there's such a handsome young man waiting to speak to you—he has a letter to deliver, and he says, he will only give it into your own hands—I hope you'll see him—I'm sure I would!

Blan. A letter, and for me, yes, let him enter?

Jaq. Oh! I'm so glad you will see him—that's just what I would have done—and he's such a charming little creature. *[Exit L. 1 E.*

Blan. Whenceshould he come? I have no friends in Paris.

Enter JAQUELINE with VICTOR, L. 1 E.

Jaq. Oh! the beautiful little fellow! I hope she'll listen to him! I know I would! *[Exit L. 1 E.*

Vic. Most lovely recluse, pardon *our* intrusion, and pardon *us*, that we rejoice in this opportunity of performing *our* mission with becoming privacy.

Blan. I think you have a letter for me, Sir?

Vic. *We* have a letter to deliver and a reply to learn.

Blan. Will't please you, Sir, to let me see the letter?

Vic. *We* intend to do so forthwith—but haste is most *uncourtierlike*—and you perceive that *we* are of the *Court*!

Blan. I should like much to see the letter, Sir.

Vic. It never yet has been *our* study to gainsay the wishes of the "illusive sex," of which *our* judgment now pronounces you the fairest, and your impatience thus *we* gratify. *[very pompously presents letter.*

Blan. *(reading aside.)*

*One who would serve you—one who learnt by chance
 Your history, writes these lines—perils unseen
 Are threat'ning you—the King alone can save you!*

*Consent to meet the page who brings you this—
At sunset at the Tuilleries eastern gate.
It is the custom of his Majesty
To walk within his garden at that hour,
The page will bring you to his presence—all
The rest lies with yourself.—A Friend.* The King
Yes, he alone can save me from the cloister,
Can give me back to Armand—Armand—whom
I still think, true! young Sir, I pray you thank
The writer of these lines—I'll do his bidding.

Vic. We congratulate you on this wise decision, and
with regret must now take our hasty leave. [*Exit bowing
very low, L. 1 E.*]

Blan. All thanks to thee, kind Heaven! for once again
My path is clear! the King, the King, shall guard me!
[*Exit L. H. 1 E.*]

SCENE II.

*Garden of the Tuilleries, at sunset. Enter KING followed
by VICTOR, L. U. E.*

King. Well, boy, what would'st thou from our bounty
now?

Vic. My Liege, the boon I crave— [*trumpet without.*]

King. What trumpet's that?

Vic. News from the seat of war, methinks; the bearer—

King. Armand himself!

*Enter ARMAND hastily, L. U. E., kneels to the KING, and
presents dispatches.*

Arm. Pardon, my gracious Liege,
That I appear thus hastily before thee!
Good tidings should have wings, to race the wind.
Another victory!

King. Which could not wait
For *form* thou think'st? Armand, our favor gives thee
A license few would dare to use!

(*to VICTOR*) Retire! [*Exit VICTOR, L. U. E.*]
(*reading despatches*) Brave news—most glorious news! my
gallant soldier!

The victory was thine—the Marshal, says so—
It earns thee once again the rank and title
Thou hast refused before!

Arm. My Liege, my sword

Hath won me all I covet or deserve !
I would not that *your favor*—but *my deeds*
Should of my fortunes be the artizan!

King. But wherefore, Armand, wilt thou coldly spurn
What others as their dearest birth-right prize?

Arm. “ And why, the trappings and the adjuncts vain
“ With which the great enshroud themselves, to awe
“ A gaping multitude, should I not scorn?
“ Free thought—free will—the birth-right true of all—
“ Manhood, the universal heritage—
“ For them, nor for a million times their worth,
“ I would not barter!”

King. “ Must thou scorn for this,”
The rank and name which proud posterity
Might carve upon some lofty monument?

Arm. I ask no monument, save that which lives
Within the bosoms of my fellow men !
No epitaph, save that which love inscribes
Upon their memories; no chronicle;
Save that the annals of my country show;
Which, if I serve it, will enroll my name
Upon the page of honored history, where,
Alone, I could be proud to see it blazoned !

King. Well, be it so; and yet one wish I have
Thou need'st must grant, De Rohan's daughter loves thee;
She's fair and rich, and virtuous. Seek her hand.
Nor be a courtier since thou likest it not,
Yet hold an honored station in our court.

Arm. My liege, I cannot wed—once hath my heart
In all the glow of its first warmth been given!
Years have rolled by since Blanche hath pass'd away—
In life's arena I have stood alone—
And wrestled on—and welcomed each new day
That led me closer to the grave—that porch
Which opens on the palace of my joy!

King. Beware! our patience is not made of stuff
Too lasting—try it not beyond its strength—
Marry De Rohan's daughter! 'Tis thy King
Commands!

Arm. My gracious liege, no King can tear
The land-marks from the honest path of Truth.
Marry! call'st thou that marriage which but joins

Two hands with iron bonds? that *yokes*, but not
Unites, two hearts whose pulses never beat
 In unison? The legal crime that mocks
 The very name of marriage—that invades—
 Profanes—destroys its inner holiness?
 No! 'tis the spirit that alone can wed,
 When with spontaneous joy it seeks and finds,
 And with its kindred spirit *blends* itself!
 My liege, there is no other marriage tie!

[Enter VICTOR with BLANCHE veiled,
 and JAQUELINE following, L. U. E.]

King. This daring is beyond endurance—nay,
 Beyond belief. Since you reject our grace
 Beware our wrath! retire.

[ARMAND exits L. 1 E.]

This stubborn boy no more shall thwart our wishes!

[VICTOR advances with BLANCHE, R. H.]

Vic. Sire, *we* should not—I should not have dared thus
 to intrude upon your privacy, but for the *fair excuse* I
 bring. Your Majesty has but to behold it, and *we* are—
 that is, *I* am secure of pardon.

King. Excuse, that takes so soft a shape brings with it
 The pardon that it asks. Leave us.

[VICTOR pompously presents his arm to
 JAQUELINE, exeunt L. 2. E.]

Now lady,

We pray thee speak—what wouldst thou have of Louis?

Blan. Perchance too much, my liege, for you to grant.
 Too little, it may be, for my great wants!

King. Speak freely then—what wouldst thou ask?

Blan. Protection!

Protection against one of rank so high
 No hand but thine could reach him—could save me!

King. His name?

Blan. Richelieu, thy favorite, and my father!

King. Thy father! can it be! has Richelieu then
 A child! I pray thee, let my hand remove
 The jealous veil that clouds thy brow.

[Blanche raises her veil.]

Great heaven!

What sorcery is this? I know that face,
 Or it hath visited my dreams,—or else

It is—must be—how like, how changed!—and yet
How like! What spell hath conjured up the dead?

Blan. Chance words, that strangely suit this stranger
chance!

For she who with these warm and living lips
Pleads to thee here, is dead to all who loved
Her best. Within a village churchyard lies
An humble stone that bears her name—and yet
She stands before you!

King. And that name was—

Blan. Blanche.

King. Oh! cheat me not enraptured eyes! deceive
Me not too happy ears! 'tis Blanche herself!
Blanche whom I saw—Blanche whom I mourned as dead!
Ah! Richelieu hath wrought this, and bitterly
Shall Richelieu rue it! Blanche is mine, and mine
In spite of fate! (*aside.*) Lady, this is no time,
No place to hear or to redress thy wrongs.
The Duke de Rohan's chateau yonder stands,
There will I place thee underneath the care
Of his most gentle duchess—let us haste.

[*As the KING advances impetuously to seize
the hand of BLANCHE, she draws back.*

Blan. My liege, I follow thee.

[*KING recovers himself, crosses and bows.*

Exeunt R. 1. E.

*Enter JAQUELINE, BABETTE, RICHELIEU, and ARMAND
hastily, L. U. E.*

Rich. Where is she?

Jaq. This is the very place, but I don't see her at all!

Arm. She lives! she lives! she walks the earth! I may
Behold her—once more clasp her to my heart!

Alive! Oh! let me not grow mad with joy! [*crosses R.*

Rich. Thy frenzy may have bitterer cause ere long!
Where is she? Woman, speak. Where is my child?

Bab. Oh, your eminence! I knew nothing about it. It
was all Jaqueline.

Arm. Jaqueline, good girl, speak thou—where is my
Blanche?

Jaq. Oh! I'll speak, Monsieur Armand; I'll tell you
everything, for Blanche never loved any body as she loves
you, and so I love you too. A beautiful little page brought

her here, and she made me come with her; then she was talking with a splendidly-dressed cavalier, and the page said, it was the King!

Rich. The King! Ah then indeed, all's lost!

Arm. All's gained!

She lives! and let Fate hide her where it will,

The ample earth is all too small to part us!

[Crosses R. and up C.]

Bab. Ah! my lord Duke, it's all right, his Majesty—

Rich. Woman, away.

Bab. Oh, my poor neck!

[Exit hastily with JAQUELINE, R. 2 F.]

Rich. (after pausing and looking at ARMAND,)

Armand, I hated thee—had planned thy ruin—

But yet I loved my child, and would have sold

Myself to slavery to have shielded her

From Louis. Now, all feelings merge in one,

That one the last! She lives—may live for thee.

Find her, and she is thine! or if, when found,

Thou canst not from the royal libertine

Defend her, save her as a Roman would.

Arm. Fear not—the King is but a man! A man

With no more rights than I, when on my rights

He dares to trench! And by that righteous heaven,

Which frowns upon this deed of infamy,

I swear to snatch her taintless from his arms!

Rich. Find her, she's thine.

Arm. I will, or lose myself!

[Exeunt hastily, RICHELIEU L., ARMAND R.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An antechamber in the Palace of the Tuilleries.

Enter RICHELIEU and LE SAGE, R. H.

Rich. How learnt you this? the truth—the truth—concealment now were vain—I overheard thee talking with the page—you spoke of Blanche, last night, again to-day, the King refused me audience—tell me, is Blanche then in his power?

Le Sage. Assuredly!

Rich. The Duke d'Antin—did I not hear you say, his hand had dealt this blow?

Le Sage. Unfortunately!

Rich. Where? Where is Blanche? Answer! dost thou not see my agony?

Le Sage. Perceptibly!

Rich. Dotard! I would not do thee violence! ha! the Duke himself approaches—begone!

Le Sage. Voluntarily! (*bows*) and speedily! (*aside.*)

[*Exit R. H.*]

Enter DUKE D'ANTIN, L. H.

Rich. I would have sought thee, Duke—pardon this haste, A father injured cannot wait on-form.

Where is my Blanche?

D'Ant. What should I know of Blanche?

Rich. Answer, old man, I charge thee! Where's my child?

D'Ant. Oh! rather, Duke de Richelieu, answer thou! Where is MY CHILD?

Rich. Speak not of her—'tis more Than twenty years, since thou hast called her daughter!

D'Ant. And if it be, think'st thou that twenty years Are lethé for a father's memory?

Be witness these white locks, whose every hair Have been the record of a separate woe!

Thou thought'st my child's destroyer was unknown,
I *knew* the subtle Richelieu's arts too well

To doubt what name the heartless villain bore.
 I did not brand thee as a libertine,
 The Court, who knew thee, had but smiled.—Redress
 I sought not—to proclaim thy treachery
 Had only been to publish D'Antin's shame!
 But on my knees, I swore to dedicate,
 All that remained of life to my revenge.
 I swore that thou shouldst taste the self-same cup
 Which thou hadst poisoned for my lip.—Richelieu,
 It is fulfilled—my hour of triumph's come!

Rich. Oh! wretched man, hadst thou but known—

D'Ant.

I knew

Enough! as thou shalt learn too late! the ruin
 That waits *thy* child is sure as that of *mine*—
 I watched her from her earliest hour—through *me*
 The King beheld her first—her seeming death
 I never credited—I tracked thy steps,
 And through a venal priest, *I set her free!*
I brought her to the King, and wove the snare
That makes her his!—Now writhe as I have writhed!
 Now tear thine hair as I tore mine!—Now cast
 Thyself in maniac fury on the earth—
 Feel all a father's agony! and pray
 As I have prayed, the living earth might yawn
 To yield a grave for a dishonored child!

Rich. Madman! what hast thou done? thy Adelaide
 Ne'er knew the blush of shame! Her weal and mine
 Forbade the court should know Richelieu had wed;
 And yet she was my wife!—*Blanche was her child!*

D'Ant. (much moved) Her child! the child of Adelaide?

Just Heaven!

I snatched the vengeance which is thine alone,
 Its gathered fury bursts upon my head!

Rich. Lose not the moments thus in bootless anguish,
 Where is she now?

D'Ant. Alas, I know not!

Rich. Haste and learn, thy spies,
 For spies thou must have used, can surely tell!

D'Ant. Oh! Adelaide! my Adelaide! is Blanche
 Indeed thy child?

Rich. No more,—thou wilt have time
 Enough for tears when there is none for action.

(*crosses R.*) Let us but find her! should we then have cause
To weep—be each fierce tear of blood alone!

[*Exeunt R. H. 1 E.*

SCENE II.

A sumptuous apartment in the Chateau of the Duke de Rohan.

*Enter BLANCHE, splendidly attired, through centre doors,
followed by JAQUELINE.*

Jaq. Dear Mam'selle Blanche, to think that I should
have found you at last! and through that beautiful little
page!

Blan. But, Armand! Oh! my best Jaqueline, my friend,
Thou hast seen Armand—and he knows I live—
He spoke of me as in our early days—

Jaq. Ay, that he did, Mam'selle, and I am sure he
loves you as much as ever.

Blan. Bless thee, Jaqueline! (*embracing her fervently*)

Oh! how one hour of joy

Can brighten a whole age of agony!

The weary years that sundered us so long

Have vanished—every pang that wrung my soul

Is blotted out from memory!—The past,

Is one of sunbeam only—and the future

Seems something brighter still—I am too blest!

Jaq. So will Monsieur Armand be—but you will scarcely
know him, he looks so altered, for he is a great soldier
now—and I think he will hardly know you in this grand
dress.

Blan. They said the king would visit me to-day,
And to receive him decked me in these robes.

Jaq. Would you not like me to seek Monsieur Armand,
Mam'selle Blanche?

Blan. Do! if thou cans't, my kind Jaqueline.

Jaq. Oh! I'll find him if he's within the walls of Paris,
be sure of that! I do so like to bring lovers together.

[*Exit R. 1 E.*

Blan. What thronging thoughts in quick succession chase
Each other through my brain! I pace these halls
As one who walks them in a dream—and Fear
By turns, convulses every trembling limb,
By turns, thine azure eyes, immortal Hope!

In visioned beauty smile upon my doubts!
While in thy cheating glass, whose magic brings
The wished for object near, my spell-bound sight
Sees Armand only!—Thus—

Enter VICTOR, C. D.

Vic. His Majesty!

Enter KING, C. D.

[Exit VICTOR, C. D.]

King. My Blanche! (*pauses and looks at her.*)

Why, this is well—this rich attire
Befits thy beauty royally—the emblem
Of greater change that waits thee!

Blan. 'Twas the Duchess
That willed it, and not I, my liege.—

King. Thy tone,
Fair Blanche, is grave, yet should no sadness mar
Its music! Now thy life shall be one pageant
Of long delight! Thine every hour a joy
Newer and gladder, and thine every wish
Fulfilment.

Blan. Sire, I have but one—restore
Me to my childhood's home, to him, without
Whose presence even that home were joyless!

King. A fate more bright awaits thee; hast thou not
Divined it? Knowest thou not thou art beloved?

Blan. I do, my liege.

King. And by thy King!

Blan. Oh, heaven!

King. Fair Blanche, look not so like the startled fawn
By friendly echoes frightened. Listen, love,
A splendid fate its golden page unrolls
Before thee. In our court the proudest place
Is thine. The queen shall yield thee her protection—
All men shall bow to her whom Louis loves.

Blan. Just heaven! can such things be! or doth some
demon

Whisper these horrors in my dreaming ear!

King. Sweet Blanche, the splendors that I proffer—

Blan. Peace!

Thou King—by passions vile unkinged! Thy words
Have scorched my brain, and should have seared thy lips
In passing them. My liege, my liege, was it

A kingly deed to snare a being helpless—
 And friendless—young as I—thus to profane
 Her ears, and seek by virtue of thy crown
 To rob her of the brightest diadem
 That can encircle woman's brow!

King. Nay, Blanche,
 Mar not thy beauty with this frigid bearing,
 Frowns do not suit those gentle eyes, nor fierceness
 Thy timid nature—weak thou art—

Blan. Not weak,
 My liege, when roused by insult and by wrong!
 I tell thee, haughty king—presumptuous man!
 That like the unshorn locks the Nazarene
 Vowed to his God—the purity of woman
 Becomes at once her glory and her might!

King. Ah, Blanche! and is there no excuse for love?

Blan. Thy love is but *self-love*! that first and worst
 Of passions—poisoned spring of every crime—
 Which hath no attribute of perfect love!

King. This to thy King?

Blan. Art kingly in thy deeds?
 The star that shines so brightly on thy breast
 Is worthless if it shed no light within!
 The throne that lifts thee o'er thy fellow men
 Should teach the virtues which alone can raise
 Thee 'bove them!

King. At thy feet let me implore—

Blan. Stand off! approach me not!

King. Thou fearest me then?

Blan. Fear thee? Danger should be where fear is—I
 See none!

King. Woman! thou shalt not brave me thus!
 (*seizes her*) No human power can save thee—thou art mine!
 What are thy feeble struggles in my grasp?

Blan. (*sinking on her knees*) Spare me, my liege, spare
 me!

King. It is thy turn
 To sue, and all in vain! thou hast forgot
 That I am King, and thou hast no protector!

Blan. (*starting up*) I have! I have! One who for-
 sakes me not!

One whom thou dardest not brave! unloose thy hold

Or dread his fury! Heaven protects me still!

[The King releases her, awed by her manner.]

Thou art my sovereign—I a friendless subject—

I woman, and thou man!—my helplessness

Was of itself a claim to thy protection—

A claim thou hast rejected! Answer, King!

Hast thou done right? Man, was it well to use

Thy strength against my weakness? Thou art dumb!

Thou canst not answer! King of France, I scorn thee!

[Exit R. 1 L.]

King. Why should I shrink from one so powerless?

And can it be that Virtue's presence awes

Me thus? *That* Virtue which no weapon needs

Except its own resistless dignity!

She speaks, I'm hushed—she spurns me, and I cower—

She leaves me, and I dare not follow her!

Enter ARMAND hastily, R. 1 E.

You here?

Arm. My lips, my liege, might echo back

The question!

King. Sir, it is thy monarch's right

To tarry where he will.

Arm. It is my right

To seek what I am robbed of where I may!

King. Darest thou?

Arm. Hadst thou not dared to wrong me—I

Had never dared to stand before thee thus.

King. "A monarch's state may sometimes sanction what—

Arm. "A monarch's state that sanctions what would shame

"A subject, doubly shames itself! when Wrong

"And Crime usurp the garments of that state,

"They grow more hideous in those glittering robes

"Than when they wear the branded felon's garb."

King. Armand! I thought thee loyal—

Arm. So I was,

When loyalty was virtue—Oh! my liege,

Because my heart 'neath ruder vesture once

Hath beat, than e'er thine own hath throbb'd against,

Think'st thou its feeling is less keen? Its sense

Of injury less delicate? thinkest thou

It will not leap as readily to kindness?
Will not revolt as quickly at oppression?
How then shall I be loyal, when my King
Would do me the worst injury that man
Can do to man?

King. What injury, rash youth?

Arm. Of my affianced bride would'st thou not rob me?
Would'st thou not rob her of—how shall I keep
My senses at the thought!—Is Blanche not here?

King. This passes bearing.

Arm. Hear me, my gracious liege, I am too bold.
Wrong has rough words, and anguish maddened me!
Bethink thee,—on the battle field I saved
Thy life. Remembering that, oh, Sire! forget
Thy passion for this maid—my promised bride.
Let it be as a cloud which dimmed the sun
But for a moment, that its after light
Might show more glorious. Do a royal act,
And do it royally, that men may see
Thy soul is royal too. She does not love
Thee, give her back to me!

King. I'll hear no more!

Arm. Ha!

King. Not another word!

Arm. Pause yet a moment.

King. Enough!

Arm. I am no more the suppliant!

My private injury grows public wrong.
The saviour or the avenger stands before thee.
Choose thou.

King. Is this the faithful soldier—

Arm. No,

It is the injured lover thou hast wronged.
The man his monarch's crimes exasperate.
Restore my Blanche, and I am what I was!
Withhold her, and I know not what I may be!
"Each sigh of hers shall to a whirlwind swell,
"And, in its fury, dash thee on the rocks
"Of Public Hate.—Each prayer she breathes shall turn
"To thunderbolts placed in thy people's hands!
"Woe—woe to him on whom a nation's rage
"With Perseus-weapons, such as these, shall burst!"

King. Within there! ho! my guards!

Enter Guards C. from R. H. with Pages.

[Guards advance to receive the sword of ARMAND.]

King. Yield up your sword.

Arm. Pardon, my liege, but never shall its edge
Flash upon battle field again. You gave it,
Take back the gift unstained, but worthless.

[Breaks the sword, retires C.]

Enter RICHELIEU and D'ANTIN hastily, R. 1 E.

King. *Sirs,*

Your ceremonial is but scanty with us
That ye intrude upon our presence thus,
Unshowered and unbidden.

Rich. Pardon, Sire,
The courtier was forgotten in the father.
I seek my child.

King. Hast thou some new deceit
To hide her from the world? Another stone
To lay upon an empty grave?

Rich. My Liege,
A father's fears—a father's fondness urged me!
Be these my plea.

D'Ant. *(crossing C.)* Grant me a word, my king.
This head has whitened, and this frame grown old
In serving France and thee. Blanche is my child
No less than his—the child of Adelaide,
Sole daughter of my house. Deny me not
My first and only prayer. Restore her to us.

King. The warring elements of good and ill
With fearful strife are battling in my soul;
But Policy with Virtue sides, and makes
The victory hers.—Richelieu, a word with thee.
Blanche is beneath this roof. Go, bring her hither.

Rich. More gladly have I never flown to do
My sovereign's will. *[Exit L. H.]*

King. Armand, d'Antin, draw near.
Harsh thoughts are written on the brow of each,
And yet, I think ye true, I know ye brave,
And would believe ye loyal,—nay, will make
Some effort so to hold ye.

Arm. Oh, my King!
Hast thou, indeed, relented?
King. See who comes.

Enter RICHELIEU, L. 1 E., leading BLANCHE, her eyes are bent upon the ground, she does not perceive ARMAND.

Arm. Blanche!

Blan. Armand, is it thou? [*with an exclamation of joy she rushes into his arms.*]

Arm. My own, my Blanche!
Is it no phantom dupes as it hath duped
So oft my willing sense? Is it thyself?
If joy could kill, this hour so richly blest
That ecstasy seems pain, would be our last.

Blan. Ah! if it were we would not murmur. Life
Hath not another moment such as this.

Rich. My child! remember thou art not thine own
To give.

Blan. My dearest father,—

Rich. Nay, I know
What thou wouldst say. First bow thy knee to one
Who claims thy reverence and love. Behold
Thy mother's sire. [*BLANCHE kneels to D'ANTIN,*
he raises and embraces her.]

D'Ant. My child! [*BLANCHE returns to C.*]

King. Blanche, (*crossing to her*) shrink no more.
I was thy lover—I am now thy King!
We claim the right to wed thee as we will.
Nay, traitress—no rebellion, for thy sire
Sanctions our choice. Armand, more chary hold
Our second gift than thou hast done the first.

[*points to the sword.*]
No more of that.—We pardon,—Blanche is thine.

~ [*joins their hands and crosses to R. H.*]

Arm. My cup is brimming over,—speak thou my
Blanche,
My long lost bride,—tell me thy happiness
Hath reached the blessed zenith of mine own?

Blan. My happiness? [*to the audience.*]
Its bounds are fixed by these,
Who've made so light our earnest task to please,
By lenient eyes, that only beauties seek,

And lenient lips, that mildest judgment speak !
Who, if some passing good they chance to find,
Seem to all else so kindly, gently blind !
Our faces are of yours the mirrors true,
Cloud 'neath your frown—grow bright at smiles from you.
What fiat then to-night may we expect ?
Shall we your censure, or your smiles reflect ?

DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF CURTAIN.

R. *King. Armand. Blanche. Richelieu. D'Antin.* L.
Guards and pages in the back ground.

THE END.

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Anything that grows in value with progressing, as does the "LORNETTE," is note-worthy in these tapering times; and why we have not spoken of the numbers as they have appeared, is simply because we have not received them; for they are of a Salmagundi spiciness, that it were dull knowingly to overlook. The sketches of a "Bostonian," a "Philadelphian," and other "Strangers in Town," as estimated in New York, are truly capital.—*Home Journal*.

The fact that the "LORNETTE" has thorough experience—that he has been "in," "of," and "through," as well as recently so far "above," the follies which he treats of so feelingly—of course gives weight and efficacy to his opinions. But we confess to have been strangely affected by these writings, previously to any knowledge of their source. There seems to be a subtle intrinsic power in their half-earnest expressions, independent of, and far superior to any extraneous authority.

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